

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
17 October, 1973

AM

10:00 CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

ADMINISTRATION

- A. Dates of next meetings: 20 November, 1973 (Tuesday)
19 December, 1973 (Wednesday)
- B. Minutes of September, 1973 meeting.
- C. Federal Enclave (National Capital Service Area) Section
of D.C. Home Rule Bill, S. 1435.

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

- A. D.C. General Services Administration
Eisenhower Memorial Convention Center, Revised Designs.
- B. Redevelopment Land Agency
"Streets for People" - F and G Street Public Space Renewal.
- C. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development
Old Georgetown Act
Appendix 1.
Shipstead-Luce Act
 - 1. S.L. 74-19, 1525 H Street, N.W. - New Columbarium and
Wall for St. John's Church.
 - 2. Washington Hotel, New Jersey Avenue and D Street, N.W. -
Preliminary Informal Submission.
 - 3. Appendix 2.
- D. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation
Preliminary Report.

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INTERVIEWS

- 11:15 A. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation
Preliminary Report.
- 11:30 B. D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency
"Streets for People" - F and G Street Public Space Renewal.
- 11:45 C. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development
Washington Hotel, New Jersey Avenue and D Street, N.W.
- 12:00 D. D.C. General Services Administration
Eisenhower Memorial Convention Center.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
17 October, 1973

The meeting convened at the offices of the Commission of Fine Arts at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Hon. J. Carter Brown, Chairman
 Hon. Nicolas Arroyo
 Hon. Jane O. Dart
 Hon. Kevin Roche
 Hon. Edward D. Stone, Jr.
 Hon. George A. Weymouth

Staff Present: Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
 Mr. Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
 Mr. William A. Bogan
 Mr. Jeffrey R. Carson
 Mr. J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr.
 Mrs. Nancy Lusher
 Miss Lynda Smith

National Capital Planning
Commission Staff Present: Mr. Edward Hromanick

D.C. Department of General
Services Staff Present: Mr. Charles Pavlick

ADMINISTRATION

A. Dates for next two meetings were set at: 20 November, 1973
 19 December, 1973.

B. Minutes of September, 1973 meeting were approved.

C. Federal Enclave (National Capital Service Area) Section of the D.C. Home Rule Bill, S. 1435. The Secretary told the Members that both the House of Representatives and the Senate had agreed that a form of increased "Home Rule" should be passed for Washington, D.C. He stated that the proposals included an elected Mayor and City Council as well as a "Federal Enclave" containing the Mall, White House, Capitol, and other of the main Government facilities in the District of Columbia to provide them Federal service management including fire, police, maintenance, etc. Congress would control local finances and give Federal control over services in special areas. The Secretary told of a letter from Mr. Diggs, Chairman of the House District Committee requesting the Commission's views on the Enclave portion of the proposed bill, The Members felt that the proposal would have

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little effect on the appearance of the Capital, nor would it effect the jurisdiction of the Commission of Fine Arts. The Chairman stated that since the proposal was a management tool, the Commission need make no comment on the various provisions.

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

A. D.C. General Services Administration

Eisenhower Memorial Convention Center, Tenth and New York Avenue, N.W. - Revised Designs. The Assistant Secretary presented a model, some photographs, and drawings showing how the architects had responded to the Commission's previous comments. In response, this 300,000 square foot convention facility now had increased exterior expression of its dramatic space-frame-trussed roof and an interpenetration of its glass, limestone facade and structural system. Though the Commission felt that the project was much improved, the Chairman suggested that the roof-top air handling units were better originally when there were eight independent projections in place of four newly recommended larger elements - the other Members agreed. Mr. Roche felt that there were several masonry corner elements, specifically on the east and west ends of the H Street facade that could be eliminated. The Commission agreed to raise these points in their discussions with the project representatives later in the morning.

B. Redevelopment Land Agency

"Streets for People" - F and G Streets on the north and south of the Old Patent Office Building and south of the Martin Luther King Public Library. The Secretary showed models and drawings for the paving, landscaping, lighting, and sign graphics for this project. He pointed out that the main concept in these projects was the closing of the streets to automobiles and forming active pedestrian spaces with tree cover, benches, and a series of fountains and cascades. In connection with this the consultants were working with the highway department to develop a new system for consolidating signs and traffic signals and integrating them throughout the downtown. The Commission referred to the Cambridge Seven street study done by the Commission some years before, feeling that much of the general effort being made on behalf of this project had been done before. Though the Members felt that the concept was still valid for the proposals, the consultant's work was too much a tour-de-force of all the current lighting and street furniture efforts all at once. Further comments were held until a meeting with project representatives later in the day.

C. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

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Old Georgetown Act

Appendix 1, approved.

Exhibit A.

Shipstead-Luce Act

1. S.L. 74-19, 1525 H Street, N.W. - New Columbarium and Wall for St. John's Church. The Secretary presented photographs and drawings of this historic church facing Lafayette Square and Sixteenth Street, N.W. The proposal was to fence off a niche in the north facade of the building (not visible from the street) and to provide paving with urn spaces. The Members had no objection to the location or concept, but suggested that a tance would be more in keeping with the historic building than a masonry wall. With the proposal so modified it would be possible to tell that a garden not a service yard was behind the enclosure.

2. Washington Hotel, New Jersey Avenue and D Street, N.W. - Preliminary Informal Submission. The Assistant Secretary presented drawings, photographs, and a model of this 900-room convention and tourist facility to be located between the Eisenhower Convention Center and the Union Station Visitor's Center. The multi-floor flat roofed structure responded to its irregular, Capitol view site with an S-shaped plan featuring a bridge over the New Jersey Avenue entrance. The building's exterior would be 8 by 8 inch bricks. The only surface variation would be to possibly set the sash back a few inches. The Chairman suggested that this tight-skinned look could be awkward if poorly detailed; Mr. Roche felt that the "style" of the building could be well handled; he cited several similar examples in New York. The Commission had several questions about glazing the lobby roof, which they held for the interview with the designer later in the day.

3. Appendix 2, approved.

Exhibit B.

D. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation

Preliminary Report. The Secretary showed the Members a series of drawings saying that the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Avenue Commission would be at the meeting later to describe phasing and improvements to the plan now in progress.

INTERVIEWS

A. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

Washington Hotel, New Jersey Avenue and D Street, N.W. The project was represented by Mr. Ralph Steinglass of Welton Becket Architects.

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The Chairman conveyed the Commission's general approval of the massing, materials, and design of the building. The Members expressed their concern over the lobby roof and Mr. Steinglass agreed to consider an all glass roof as they proceed with the design. No official action was taken pending submission of the design through proper Shipstead-Luce channels.

B. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation

Preliminary Report. Mr. John Woodbridge, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, presented a series of drawings and gave the Commission a status report on the planning time-frame. He pointed out several alternatives for the National Square at 15th and Pennsylvania Avenue which had originally been a large rectangle, but had been cut down in size and could potentially leave the street open, retain the Willard Hotel or all of the above. He stated the coordination with the Pershing Memorial at the south end of the square was in progress. This element of the design, which had been one of the most controversial, was now being pursued with alternatives. The general tree planting, sidewalk configuration, and widening of the avenue, as previously approved by the Commission of Fine Arts, were not being tampered with at this time. Mr. Woodbridge mentioned a new concept for the Market Square at 8th and Pennsylvania Avenue. This was to be use changed - to housing, with no specific design or program. The upper-middle range housing would be court-clustered combinations of townhouses and apartments, probably with deck parking and some commercial. The Commission had no objection to this concept, but recommended against diminishing the impact of Market Square in the design process. Mr. Woodbridge felt that this would be no problem. No action was required, but Mr. Woodbridge suggested that near the new year a fully designed plan would be presented to the Commission of Fine Arts.

C. D.C. General Services Administration

Eisenhower Memorial Convention Center. The project was represented by Messers Gordon and Caputo of the District Government and Mr. H. H. Brennan of the architects, Welton Becket. The Chairman expressed the Commission's appreciation for the cooperation of the District Government and the architects in responding so successfully to the Commission's previous advice. In approving the project the Commission asked that caution be taken with any use of Cor-Ten Steel on the facia, so that there could be no staining on the limestone panels which were enthusiastically recommended. EXHIBIT C.

D. D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency

"Streets for People" - F and G Street public space renewal. The

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project was represented by Messers Stan Sherman and Larry Press of the RLA and the architect-consultant Mr. John Myer. Mr. Sherman made some general comments about the scope and timing of the project and his agency's desire to have the Commission of Fine Arts' reaction to the graphics and lighting proposals as well as the actual design of the proposed pedestrian areas. The Chairman expressed the Commission's concern over the large number of elements being proposed for inclusion in the project, he suggested that fewer types of light fixtures be used in the final design and that the water features be simplified. The Chairman also suggested that the Commission of Fine Arts had a general rule against overhead construction on the city streets, and that the proposed horizontal arm containing street directions and names as well as traffic lights would obscure street vistas. The Commission offered to assist in further study of all of the graphic and design elements of the project as they became more exact.
EXHIBIT D.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:55.

Signed,



Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE OLD GEORGETOWN ACT

17 October, 1973

NO.	<u>ADDRESS AND OWNER</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>
OG 74-46	1601 Caton Place, N.W. William P. and Margaret Arnold ACTION: Issue permit. 10/3/73	Install bay window.
47	3248 O Street, N.W. Franz Oppenheimer ACTION: Issue permit. Recommend new sash be dark color. 10/3/73	Enclose existing covered porch; remove wood deck and steps; erect new deck and steps.
48	1363 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. National Shoes ACTION: Issue permit for bronze color letters. 10/3/73	Sign (resubmission refer to OG 74-29).
49	3330 Reservoir Road Dr. Javier Sagaminaga ACTION: Recommended. 9/21/73	Two new prefabricated fireplaces.
50	1312 33rd Street, N.W. Rose Vallila ACTION: Issue permit for brick wall. 10/3/73	Parking space in rear yard.
52	1806 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. Jean Lewis ACTION: Issue permit. 10/3/73	Sign (resubmission refer to OG 74-44).

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT

17 October, 1973

<u>NO.</u>	<u>ADDRESS AND OWNER</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>
SL 74- 17	636 Maine Avenue, N.W. Wilson Boat Lines	Attaching to front of building with 2" studs 10 - 12" high black plexiglas letters to read "Wilson Line".
ACTION: Issue permit for identical letters to existing, on same line as existing. 10/15/73		
18	733 15th Street, N.W. S. Jon Gerstenfeld	Cart to sell flowers and fruit.
ACTION: Issue permit. 10/12/73		
20	731 15th Street, N.W. Jack Chafin	Reface one-half of existing sign.
ACTION: Issue permit. 10/10/73		

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

J. CARTER BROWN, Chairman

NICOLAS ARROYO

CHLOETHIEL WOODARD SMITH

JANE O. DART

EDWARD STONE, JR.

KEVIN ROCHE

GEORGE WEYMOUTH

CHARLES H. ATIERTON, Secretary

708 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
202-343-5324

30 October, 1973

Dear Mr. Caputo,

I am happy to confirm that at the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on October 17, 1973, revised designs for the Eisenhower Convention Center were approved.

The exterior expression of the truss spanning the main convention floor adds greatly to the scale and the drama of the facades. This is also true of the greatly increased use of glass on the lower floor. Combined with the detail of chamfering the upper edge to show the interior structure, these changes again contribute much to expressing a sense of activity that is altogether appropriate to a large convention center.

During our discussion with the architects, the Commission questioned a couple of details, and hope they can be given further study. The first concerned the use of two or three solid wall elements on the lower story, especially at corner situations. It seemed to us they appeared a little weak and tended to detract from the simplicity of the overall design. The other concerned the mechanical penthouses, which appeared to have been given added emphasis over the first design. This is not a particularly desirable goal and the Commission recommends the architects return to their earlier concept of eight smaller units.

We would also like to sound one note of caution. As you know, Cor-Ten Steel, which the architects propose to use in the expression of the truss, is a very handsome material if used properly. But any water drainage from it also severely stains abutting materials. It is essential that the relation of the exposed truss to the limestone walls be carefully studied to keep this from happening.

Finally, the Commission was glad to see the selection of limestone for the facades. It's a time tested material and its use will avoid any of the color control problems encountered with precast concrete as originally proposed.

In approving this submission, let me extend the Commission's appreciation to the architects and the District Government officials for the efforts that have been made in behalf of a much improved design for the Convention Center.

We will be happy to assist you further at the appropriate times.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown,
Chairman

S. A. Caputo. Project Manager
Eisenhower Civic Center Project
District Building, Room 207
14th & E Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

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CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

708 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
202-343-5324

31 October, 1973

Dear Mr. Mister,

The Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting on October 17, 1973 considered further development of the Streets for People design studies of F and G Streets next to the Portrait Gallery.

The Commission approved the scheme for F Street between 7th and 9th, but we have reservations about the treatment of G Street both in front of the National Collection of Fine Arts and the Public Library. With so many elements, shapes and uses of water (cascades, jets, pools, and running streams), planting types (umbrella pines and Chinese scholar trees), fixed and freeform geometry, level changes, walls, and steps, the whole effect is one that was too busy, too contrived. The area in front of the Library seemed especially complex, with water seemingly running everywhere.

We feel that some measure of restraint is called for in pulling these preliminary studies into their final form. By doing so, the Commission believes these projects will better serve the people. Programatically, of course, this is the main focus, and not the design as an end in itself.

In terms of some of the details that were presented regarding street furniture, signs, signals, kiosks, etc., the studies are generally laudable - with two exceptions. The Commission has a long standing policy of keeping the vistas of Washington streets free of any intrusions, at least to the greatest extent possible. Therefore we do not favor the horizontal projection of traffic signals and recommend they be restudied as a vertical assembly. Secondly, there is already an approved bus shelter design that was developed by WMATA and the Council of Governments for use in the entire Washington area, so it would be a mistake to depart from this design. We suggest you contact the WMATA design office to coordinate their installation, as they are in the process of installing some five hundred units at the present time.

Exhibit D.

The Commission is scheduled to meet on November 20, 1973, and we will be happy to reserve time for further presentation of the project.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Melvin A. Mister, Executive Director
Redevelopment Land Agency
1325 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

J. CARTER BROWN, Chairman

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KEVIN ROCHE

GEORGE WEYMOUTH

CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

708 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
202-343-5324

5 November, 1973

Dear Mr. Dripps,

Since meeting with you on October 10, 1973, we have given careful study of the matter of modifying the present Shipstead-Luce Act boundaries. As a result of our studies, the Commission of Fine Arts would like to propose the following changes, also shown on the accompanying map:

At the intersection of 15th Street and New York Avenue, N.W., proceed northeasterly on New York Avenue to 10th Street, N.W.;
Then north to N Street;
East to 6th Street;
South to Massachusetts Avenue;
Southeasterly on Massachusetts Avenue to North Capitol Street;

the present boundary is joined at this point.

The area thus defined includes the central downtown business core; the Eisenhower Convention Center; Federal City College; F and G Street pedestrian malls; the National Portrait Gallery and the National Collection of Fine Arts; and the 8th Street pedestrian mall. It also encompasses the entire area embraced by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation.

When the Redevelopment Land Agency, together with Metro, develop sites within the commercial core, all projects, including the pedestrian malls, are automatically referred to the Commission of Fine Arts for review at the present time. The same is true, of course, for all the other above mentioned projects as they are under the aegis of either the District of Federal Government, both of which are required by law to submit projects which affect the appearance of Washington to the Commission of Fine Arts for review.

So there is an enormous investment in public facilities within the boundaries of this area for which the Commission already has some measure of control. Yet there is no agency of either the Federal or

District Government which has the authority of design review for private construction in this same area. It would only take one or two bad buildings next to the Eisenhower Center to irreparably damage the setting and Mount Vernon Square for a long time to come.

I do not believe it is necessary to labor the obvious - that this is planning at its worst. Nor is it necessary to argue the need to correct the situation as soon as possible.

As we stated in our letter to Mayor Washington, the Shipstead-Luce Act affords the District Government the necessary legal machinery to exact whatever design review it wishes over private construction. The statutory authority to issue permits still rests entirely with the municipal government, while the aesthetic review resides with an independent agency solely with advisory powers - the Commission of Fine Arts.

Please give me a call if you have any questions or if there is any other way we can assist - our number is code 183-5324. Our next meeting is scheduled for November 20, 1973, and I would hope that we could have some report of progress before then.

Sincerely yours,



Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

William N. Dripps, Chief
Bureau of Building, Housing and Zoning
Department of Economic Development
District of Columbia Government
Room 203, North Potomac Building
614 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

